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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU
~~DIVISION~~ OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
Division of Western European Affairs

EXCISE
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March 23, 1950

To: Mr. Achilles - WE

From: Mr. Winfree - WE

Subject: Belgian crisis

Yesterday, March 22, Eyskens announced that he had failed in his attempts to form a coalition government and asked the Prince Regent to relieve him of his conciliator's job. [redacted] the Prince Regent appointed Henri Carton deWiart to succeed Eyskens in an attempt to perform a conciliation.

The crisis is deemed so serious in Belgium that a meeting of the Council of State has been called. This Council, composed of 28 ministers of state, has not met since 1914.

The Liberals, who have been split on this question, have now joined forces with the Socialists in a demand for Leopold's abdication.

The Socialists have ordered a 24-hour general strike in the Walloon provinces for tomorrow. It is expected that mass demonstrations will be held in Mons, Charleroi, Liege and La Louviere during this strike.

It was interesting to hear from a member of the Belgian Embassy yesterday that thus far they had not even been informed officially of the results of the referendum in Belgium, but had had to rely solely on newspaper reports for their information.

EUR:WE:RMWinfree:sme

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